

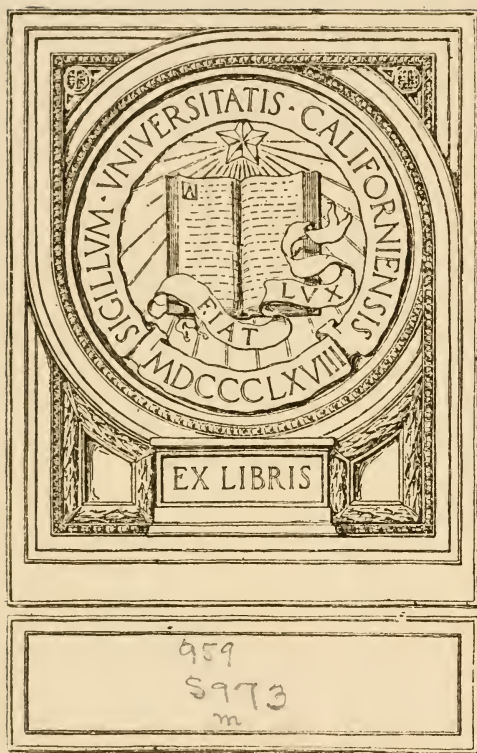
MEN OF NO LAND

MILDRED M. NEAL-SWEENEY

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MEN OF NO LAND

MEN OF NO LAND

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

MILDRED M'NEAL-SWEENEY

LONDON

T. FISHER UNWIN

ADELPHI TERRACE

1912

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Acknowledgment is due to the editors of *McClure's Magazine*, *Harper's Magazine*, *The Century*, *Poet Lore*, *The Circle*, *Collier's Weekly*, *Lippincott's Magazine*, the *Atlantic Monthly* and others, for their courteous permission to reprint certain of the following poems. The poem, *Three Hands*, is reprinted from a previous book, *When Yesterday was Young*.



To

How shall I come with praise for the intimate name
Poets and friends have loved, who stand at the door
A stranger, my homage and love paid long before
By friend and poet as each with full hands came.
Their word returns in mine, a far running flame,
The purest word Praise has within her store :
*Here lives one who is The Poet—and is more—
And more than a memory this and more than fame.*

For Life and I, reading too, one anxious day,
From the glowing lines in sudden pause looked up.
The poet, his page, slipped unperceived away
And at our lips there brimmed the immortal cup—
The Vision, like a lost land, sprang clear again—
The vague path shone to our coming. All was plain.

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MEN OF NO LAND

MEN OF NO LAND¹

WE are the Men of No Land
And with our wives and infants
Pallid and fainting we pass,
Doubtful and hand in hand,
The length of the London streets—
Whitechapel, Mile End, Bishopsgate—
Oh and the tramping was weary—
Poultry, Cheapside, Ludgate Hill,
Fleet Street—into the Strand.

Tramping the best of the day
And never a friendly look ;
Only the wondering, curious,
Gathered along the way

¹ Dedicated to the Unemployed of the City of London, whose wives and children marched in the Labour Procession from the East End, on 6th November 1905.

To see the tatters we wore,
The thin, poor flesh looking through,
The arms dead aweight with children :
And oh the stones of the rich, grim buildings
Were tender of heart as they !

The long day and none to heed ;
For we are Men of No Land,
And our best and bitterest words,
The cries of our utter need,
They flit with the careless wind,
Unheard, past empty ears.
No sons of the city we,
But Dread and Menace and Burden—
Men of an ugly breed.

A weary tramp it was—
Hunger hard at our heels
The length of the London streets—
And all for a hopeless cause.
Hopeless. Shelter and bread,
Little enough, we asked
And leave to earn them like men,
With work, long work, dull drudging work !
But men have made strange laws.

Palaces we passed by,
Prisons—and they were warm—
Shops, all colour and light,
And slender spires, running high

As our hope ran once, long since ;
And always the eyes, the eyes,
All waiting, peering, following,
As we walked, the wind among our rags,
Too weary for any cry.

Everywhere plenty and ease,
Everywhere comfort, friends,
Save for the Man of No Land.
And he—"He must wait. Must freeze,
Wander, forage and starve.
We know not what to do.
The evil times may pass."
Meanwhile, "The Men of No Land are few
They dare not strike and seize."

Rich, very rich shall they be,
The rich housed there in the west,
Idle, well nourished, warm—
So the strange laws decree.
But the poor ! No word of them
Where they huddle, cold, unclothed,
Prey of all hungers, with ever
At the fireless hearth, the empty table,
Death sitting watchfully.

We thought that they could not know—
They, wearing broadcloth, furs—
How poor poor men can be !
And "Come," we said, "we will go—

Bearing our ancient burden,
Hunger, nakedness, heartache,
Misery of wife and child.

The men of ease will arouse for the men
Who suffer—when they know.”

And we marched the London streets,
Together, quiet, in order,
Mother and child and sire :
And the length of the London streets,
Fleet Street, Ludgate Hill, Cheapside,
Bishopsgate, Mile End, Whitechapel,
We tramped them back in the dusk—
Men of No Land, we had no words
To smite to the rulers' seats.

With patched shoes wet and worn,
With bodies weary—weary,
We tramped it back in the dusk,
Grey beard and youngest born,
Little, lagging, heavy-eyed children,
Fathers, gaunt with denial,
Mothers—their wishing all spent
Save one, that the helpless babes they carried
Had been unconceived, unborn.

We are Men of No Land, we are few—
Only some thousands and more—
And we dare not strike and seize
The poor loaves lying in view

In the shops, or the heartening meat
That would make our children young,
Or the coats for the little bodies
Crying for cold. Yes—weak we are,
And feeble of spirit and few.

And we stand, loving-men, hating-men,
And watch while our little ones
Waste mutely away to their death,
Counting the days, and when
The time is come, bless the last
For the last of the tortured smiles,
And cover the little bodies,
Needing no longer either food or fire !
Ah we, hating-men, loving-men.

For the island that gave us birth
What have we left in our hearts
Save only dismay, despair.
We reckon how little is worth
The boast of the English blood
When men with that blood in their veins
Turn vainly to English men—
Vainly—and nowhere else to turn
Among all races of earth.

Poverty, drudgery, life—
So it is meted to some.
Poverty, death, no drudgery—
First to the children, the wife—

For they are the weaker—so runs
The measure for us, loving-men,
Quickly-hating-men. And we,
Men of No Land, nor sons of the city,
We waste no useless strife,

No trial of the pitiful sum
Of our strength! No hope in the hearts
(Tender hearts) of the men of plenty :
Patiently herding and dumb
In the misery past all speech
We await the day—when it falls,
We spring to embrace the last of days
So useless, and smile upon swift-moving fate
For the No-More-Days-to-Come.

THE BURDEN BEARERS

AND dawn again—not here : too far
For any following foot,
Out on the April coloured hills
Where we make no pursuit
Save, as we can, in thought, and wonder
How looks the budding fruit
And lovely, high lying lands of blue,
And fields bespread with dew.

For we have never touched dew—not we.

The red fruit with the dew on it—
Fingers so rough so ugly as ours—

How illy do they fit !

Nor ever comes the clear cock crowing,

They tell of, where we sit,
Toiling, already, in close rooms
At our unceasing looms.

Our dawn strikes with spite and a scream

The hot roofs where we lie
One with another and many more !

No moment left to try
The sweet of the air ! It is hasten—hasten—

Already hundreds have gone by
Hastening toward the mill, and the gate
Will close if we are late.

Strange note of the dawn—a thousand feet

And a thousand more, so early, gone
Out of the world God made into

A new and noisier one !
Do you, sleeping late upon cool pillows,
Think ever of us, shut out of the sun,
When our daily, multitudinous haste
In passing breaks your rest ?

For us no days—a glimpse of morning,

A snatch at sunset—oftener rain
To trudge through ! No high-climbing noon,
Splendid with sun—no wane

To a night of stars and such cool resting
As makes limbs young again !
For us only the hot brick walls
And the whistle when it calls.

A book ? I had one very long since—
Two covers, some leaves, a picture or two,
Just to turn over, sometimes, at night :
I never read it through :
Better to be outside with the others,
Resting a little—nothing to do.
Work is so long and now and then
Men need to talk with men.

Last night my boy brought in some flowers.
A lady, passing, divided them.
Daisies they were, with great gold hearts—
He never had one from the stem.
They grow, I have heard, somewhere, so many
That all the fields are white with them.
But the flowers are few enough one meets
These stony miles of streets.

I sometimes wonder did God intend
To bury the grass so under stones,
And shut the road in with hot walls—
I have heard of green and windy ones,
And mew men up, *men*, out of freedom
Through the sweet passing of all the suns ;
And all for a few pence, not enough
To make our way less rough !

There are so many with time to watch
Daily their little children's looks,
To laugh at their sweet ways and mark down
Their pretty words in books.
But we—men too—with as lovely children,
We see them only in the nooks
Of sleep, and scarcely call it sight,
So dim the candle light.

It's not the rough going work we grudge.
Work's in the world. We were meant for it,
Man and man and all together,
Each where the skill may fit.
It is the time men find so golden,
The time we cry for, a little of it ;
Time not to hasten—the time that spends
A quiet day with friends.

But ours the machines, always. Lusty and shrill,
Intent and terrible, all day long—
With ourselves for the weaker part of them—
They drone the unpitying song.
It is *Here* and *Now* and *Be doing—doing*.
Where men labour there they belong.
And we labour, gathering all our powers.
We do not count the hours.

And soon the clack, the speed, the clamour
Smooth to one vast, unvarying sound,
Sound without pause. Whereto we answer
Moment by moment—a dizzy round—

With faithful, swift, unwearying fingers,
Which, somehow, these years have found
The dull and well tasked way set plain,
And travel without the brain.

The brain, bright lord of all labours, in us
Is bondsman still. Our sober eyes
Are the windows barred, of his lifelong prison.

Mute is the wondrous, young surmise,
Lost is the impulse that was our youth.

We stand as the daily sacrifice
To pleasure the quick, imperious need
Of the few, grown poor in greed.

Strength of the young body, work of the hands !

Little indeed it was they sought
From us, the people ! Our great, rude gift
Is nameless still, and is held for naught
In a world uncaring and having no need.

New dreams, far, new adventures of thought
Somewhere among us there should be
If body and brain were free.

But ah ! from us, the great handed people—

The world, knowing nothing of us, can ask
No more—alas, no more indeed—

Than the plain sum of The Task.
And we—was that music passing ? we wear
Sunrise to sunset the patient mask.
The old heart longing goes unheard.
We work. And say no word.

THE SILVER IN THE PALM

HONOUR, creeds, the love of lands,
Faith keeping faith this many a day,
Right all reverend, Truth grown grey—
See them, holding covetous hands.

“Silver—silver in the palm!”
So the cry goes till it brands
Desire again on Youth and Honour,
Struggling forward as they may.

The generous hire, the shining fees
Went once to underlings and slaves.
Fools, even, and smoothly-spoken knaves,
Servilely fallen upon their knees
Had their silver in the palm—
'Twas given neither for favour nor ease—
Paid their grudging service truly
For the idle price man craves.

Vassals first, then priests and kings,
Now the brother and the friend
Leave us, all resolved to mend
Their plain estate with finer things.
“Silver—silver in the palm.”
So the old greed lives and clings
With the old reckoning of how little
Of toil, in the winning, one must spend.

Was there ever the time indeed
When men served for love of men,
Spent their stores, their strength, and then
After stores and strength, at need—
Not for silver in the palm,
Not for any prompting of greed—
Cast their lives into the measure
Nor thought the utter giving vain !

The time we cherish in the heart !
The time of long, very long ago,
Whose when and where men scarcely know,
Whose sons loved not the angry mart,
The heaping, shining silver in palm,
Nor worked for self, nor stood apart,
But sought some vast and kindly good
Together, for all, as need might show.

Oh, thrice, thrice fallen to-day ! A gleam
Far off of gay rewards to seize
Dazzles our honest purposes,
Dulls the right doing and the dream.
The silver shines in the willing palm
And what was generous, supreme,
Sinks basely to a boughten service,
Sold out again for higher fees.

A smirched and doubtful pay, a mean
And secret task we dare not show—
These do we take with eyes aglow.
Desired coin is never unclean

Heaping lustrous in the palm,
And if Shame should peer between,
Cheeks aflame and eyes low fallen,
Is there any one to know ?

When faith is bartered, to the sale
Comes the cool censure of the crowd,
Weakness and need crying sadly aloud,
And sorrow and doubt ; but none assail
The silver, filling the eager palm,
If Justice, faint-hearted, weak-handed, fail,
And yield her olden austere glories
To sleek heads, sinful and unbowed.

Tamely we live the long disgrace !
Good gone begging in mire and rain,
Wrong with a brow of fine disdain,
We meet each chance with even face.
Some dribble of silver in the palm
Perhaps, contents us with our case.
We take the little, hope for the much,
And go our sordid ways again.

We dream no longer—seek to climb
No more the giver's arduous road,
Where Self never travels. We shun the load
Nor dare renew the brave, lost time
Of open, sun-brown brotherly hands,
Of the joyous heart with love at prime,
And quick, unstinted, generous doing
For those who trudge beneath the goad.

POEMS



I WOULD NOT BE THE HOUSED SOUL

I WOULD not be the housed soul—not I—
In the pale limit of one dwelling set,
Having my treasures in a cabinet,
And of these lovely lands—this dawn flung high—
Pale copies done in oils hung coldly by—
Books in a careful row lest I forget,
In place of field romances dewy wet,
And that perpetual tender page, the sky.

Not this, O God of the open, God of the sea,
God of the air, whose every breath is change !
Let Thy star-set illimitable distance be
My body's house ; for my possessions all
Thoughts, and one dream forever great and strange ;
And for my feet one path running ever out of call.

MEADOW-GREEN AND VIOLET

GREY as the dusk is, chill as the rain
In a waning summer, as the tides in a storm
Envious and fleet—I will not wear you
Oh, grey cloud following, neither own nor yield to you :

No colour of you shall come dully upon my head
Veiling the morning, marring with mist
The brief time of my day.

‘ For I have chosen to wear light for my garment—
Sunlight made sweet by a heaven-going wind,
Sunlight made fair with the many-throated singing
Of glad and young and companioning birds.
Meadow-green will I wear, violet, fern-colour,
Cool as a wood with a brook at its heart.
Meadow-green and sunlight—here shall no mist
Darken and cling. Meadow-green and sunlight
Spun with the singing and the heaven-going wind—
These for my wearing
This bright, uncertain and so quickly ending
Time of my day.

THE SHIP

’TWAS full morning when I woke.
Turning on my heavy bed
When at last the long dream broke,
Dully did I lift my head,

And look out from my strait bound,
The ancient, the appointed place,
From eyes that seek and have not found—
On my world of many days.

In the mid sky hung the moon,
Like a fair ship upward cast,
With one lanthorn left at noon
Glowing from the dipping mast.

And her times were fleet and long !
And her times they are no more !
Ends the voyage—ends the song !
She is come to her last shore.

But the dream and the desire
And the sweet speed for the goal—
Still, a deep consuming fire,
These illumine the gallant soul,

And shine against the pallid day,
The alien day that came too soon—
All deathless in the last dismay,
Like a lanthorn left at noon.

WITH THIS ONE BANNER BLOWING IN MY HEART

FROM the secure sweet present we must be gone.
Oh Real, oh Very Dear, the time has slain—
Slain in pure haste your lovely presence, slain
Your season and mine when scarce it was our own.

You were my love. And wear love's old renown
Of faithful, perilous, fleet. But if I gain
The breath, the tender flower of this bright pain
To make perpetual e'er itself be gone—

With this one banner blowing in my heart, not I
Pressing forward still to the end no mortal knows
Shall ever among the sorry fallen lie.
Burden and pain ! I shall not name them so,
Nor feel the springing thorn upon my rose,
Nor hear them saying—"Love's past. 'Twas long ago.

IN DELOS—IN THE DRIFTING ISLE

It was within the narrow isle—
The isle long since that drifting tried
The southmost sea—where not a field
Could wish to be more wide,
When that its straight bound so might yield
A charm the princelier lands have not revealed—
This view so fair upon the far-off blowing tide.

To that low wall of ancient stone
An idle wanderer I came,
And found me there a world too new—
Too briefly fair to name ;

For there against the Ægean blue,
A thousand flowers were at their first review,
Spreading to gentle winds the valour of their flame.

Soon was the ruined barrier passed ;
And in the grasses down I lay
And saw no more than one clear sky—
One azure from the bay—
One many blossomed mist, that high
Above me, with a soft continuing sigh,
Lent a bright hem of colour to the paler day.

A nodding poppy on her stem—
Straight up she stood against the sun
And floated stilly like a cloud.
And of her mates not one
But wore a face as gently proud,
And danced a round among the fairy crowd,
In golden mantle and fine by meek rain women spun.

So lying, I changed from what I was ;
With ears that scarce were mine, almost
I heard a mute and lovely tune
Some chanting god long since had lost :
And saw by other eyes, within the noon,
Fleet for the chase, and wearing her silver moon,
Diana, upon her way, adown the singing coast.

THE TIME OF FIRST DELIGHT

THE years are upon their way ; and it is late ;
And you come very near,
Friend Care, with your grave eyes
And sombre shadowing robe of grey.
But there is a wisdom within me still denies
Yielding my dawn, my noon, my starry night
To your cold cheer.
And so
I slip one shining day
Out of your watch : and pass the quiet gate
You do not know,
And enter where Joy holds the bright estate
That is my own—
My Time of First Delight.

Like hope in the heart, perpetually fair,
Is this one day of mine.
The sweet winds all day long
Blow up the wide and blossoming field.
Brave youth runs back and greets me with a song,
And hand in hand and while the dawn is bright
We pass the dewy line

Of forest path
And edge the rippled shield
Of water, just below, and wander where
The brook's soft aftermath
Of constant song follows the bird in the air.
The place—the song—the hour—they are my own,—
Saved from the years—my Time of First Delight.

By this life's faulty measure is made complete
The time without an end,
Time entered when I list—
Time kept always, though it was long ago !
Here do I make at will my faithful tryst
With hope and love and all spirits that are bright.
Here all the evils mend
And not a heart
Owns any rule of woe.
Wholly given again to joy, with laughing feet
Out of the world's rough mart
I come, and dance with the hours that were so fleet,
And overlook the beauty that is my own—
My heart's estate—Time of my First Delight.

THE UNKNOWN VOICE

I SAW her not.
But suddenly, as a dream
Is made for the moment real, or as a wandering beam
Of the great sun is caught in a hidden stream.

Oh, suddenly,
 And in my heart she sang ;
 And that so lonely spot with all sweet measures rang.
 I had not known that such a voice could be.

Oh, warm and true !
 A chamber of pure peace
 She set within my soul—gave to my hand the keys,
 And sang it round, and ending did not cease.
 The mute felicity
 Within my heart breathed up.
 My living wine I knew—within its golden cup.
 I had not dreamed that such a voice could be.

AT BAIA

THE long path steepened as it climbed
 And all the way was in the sun.
 At our heels the brown boys rhymed---
Guida, cinque sold, signore.
Bel' Chiesa. Bel' fiore.
 A fairer offer from each one.

When I turned, like one deep pool
 Far down I saw my restless sea,
 Pale as a mirror is, and cool
 As early morning. *Otto ott'*
Signora mia, per la grott'.
 How could so gentle a water be !

Upon it, or upon the air,
For where is he will know these twain—
And who could say if near or far—
 A misty isle made one brief splendour—
 Un' sold'—a new voice, piping, tender,
Thus to be known, and dimmed again.

Then in the happy quiet came up
My pain, my wandering, my doubt.
Each ancient woe as in a cup
 It brimmed and brimmed to its release :
 Then brightening down into the peace
Each little woe, alone, slipped out,

Until the weary round was spent.
If but the restless heart could lie,
Even for a day in this content—
 Even for a day—*La Solfatara*.
 Venite, Signo', a Santa Chiara
And mirror back the golden sky.

And know within her empty bound
That one secure sweet harbour lay
For peace. Then shrill as birds around
 Tutt' è compreso. Ech' signora,
 Venti soldi per un' hora—
. . . Again we bent us to the way ;

But as we trudged against the sun
 My heart cried out. Is there indeed
 Within the stormy soul this one

Bright port? *Bellissima vedut'.*

Senza guid' è via perdut'.

If it be true make speed—make speed.

THE GREEN PATH

A GREEN hill up—a green hill down ;
 Between—the path, a fairy thread
 Blown in the May wind from the town.
 The early grass so thick is grown
 I ask what mortal foot has sped
 Along before me, and more than once,
 To mark the faint line for my own.

I pace in the wind. And time fulfills.
 And soon, before my step, there runs
 A little figure between the hills.
 The fairy voice, long dreamed of, shrills
 In laughter, and the bright head suns
 A way along, for she will try
 The steep, the smooth, the plash of rills.

Forward we look, we two. The way
We take is not half long enough,
But shall be, on another day—
Or so, with cheek touching cheek, we say :
And—never shall the way be rough.
—But ah, dear, dear heart—I had forgotten—
I go not with her all the way.

DOUBT—AND THE SONG

*The first green comes and flowers blow
And take their chance with snows and the wind.
They beckon—and I think they know—
Saying, "Yonder it is the summers go,
And men and maidens and flowers follow.
Come with us, then—the place is kind."*

But Doubt came in and tilled the field
He took from me, and made to start
His lines of eager, bannered men
Upon its length ; and in my heart

Put up his house, whereto I came
Often, in passing, unwillingly.
Yet still he bade me go within
And had his confident word with me.

A vine grew green upon his roof.

His many watching men took toll
Wherever I passed. His home was set
Within the land that is my soul.

But one divine cool valley remained
Hidden in the hills. There was no clue
To the narrow climbing path going thither
Save for a heart that loved—and knew.

Mine was the one heart. Very soon
I found the trail and made it plain
For my return. Below the spring
I sat, first, listening ; and again

Came up to hear, and stayed ; and found
An impulse like a liquid well
Risen in my hot and troubled heart.
The spring had quiet news to tell—

Tranquil and strange they were as dawn,
Kind as the running brook water.
They spoke, they chanted, soon they sang.
And I, for my gift, had ears to hear.

*Men live and labour and grow grey.
Theirs is the chance of sun and wind
And fleet time bearing all away.
What death will be no man should say—
With death begins another day :
And One is watching Who is kind.*

Doubt, at his vigil, nothing heard,
His thought bent all to closer things.
But I ran quickly down to him
With my new joy, saying "Hear. It sings—

"This word I caught up yonder. To you
I listened once, but now 'tis I
Have found the single, perfect reason.
Here is my song. Oh come! And try!"

He took the cadence frowning up—
And tried. But at the exquisite
Soft measure faltered—could not catch
The lovely turn, and bungled it.

Then scanned it over, narrowly :
And "Here it lacks" he said, "And here."
And tossed it back. "Poor measure—that.
A song's no proof," and would not hear

My truer singing. It was then
I laughed him down and far along
Ran out with it, singing over and over.
What was his *therefore* to my *song*!

*The leaf, the flower, the stream—and I
No less—and the elder frost and wind!
Young children we, and sent to try
A sweet familiar road. The sky
Is faithful over us and near by
There is One watching Who is kind.*

AND FLEETLY I RUN—AS EVER

DAY upon day !

And ever

Where we would linger, the same

Day upon day,

Calling us where we stay

Housed in content, with quick, imperious claim.

Thorns in the path

As ever,

Barbing the flowers we choose :

Stones in the path

And clouds marching out in wrath,

And a sun so bright—and a sun so quick to lose !

But close to my side

As never—

Never, oh heart, before,

Came yesterday

And walked with me all the way—

Love ! Dear, dear love—and spent his ungrudging store.

Hand in my hand

As never—

Never before, he paced :

Eyes to mine eyes

Telling all things under the skies

That a heart should hear when a heart by heaven is graced.

Then, *Day upon day*

As ever.

Steep and briar and sun !

Day upon day !

The land fallen somewhat grey,

No warm touch in my fingers, foot keeping time alone.

Followed the pang

As ever,

Such as all women bore

Whenever the forest bird sang

On roses flushed where they hang

Over the happy waters : but now they matter no more—

The lost, dear touch—

Eyes never,

Never to be met again !

Out of so much

Of love, what are these but love's poor crutch

Whereon he hobbles, murmuring, remembering only his
pain.

And fleetly I run

As ever—

Calling life new and sweet.

I sing my joy to the sun

And laugh, gay face set forward, pacing alone !

For oh, I have loved—I love ! Loving will never be done !

Loving is lord of life and hath made my times complete.

FOR A GUEST CHAMBER

Not long since it was I
All city-weary who lay
In this sweet narrow bed
And could it have been I
Who felt sweet sleep begin
And slept until the day ;
Then raised a blither head
To drink that brimming air ;
And had my bowl—my bread ;
And came in joy away ?

And now, oh other guest,
Upon this happy night
'Tis you are lying there.
And soon the same sweet rest
Will fold you warmly in
And make your grave heart light
And lift away your care.
And you will, even as I,
Find some new joy to wear,
Drink up the brimming air
And blithelier come away.

LINES TO A YOUNG DUTCH LADY¹

LITTLE woman out of Holland,
 All the years were kind to you.
 Fives and tens and many twenties—
 They have left you as you grew,
 Younger than most women are—
 With a look as clear as dew.

Round and brown and good and comely,
 All your youth is in you still,
 Little woman out of Holland ;
 You have kept your pretty will
 And wear your joy above your eyes
 Like a golden daffodil.

You will play with many children—
 You a child as dear as these.
 And your lips will set the laughter
 For their hearts—wherein will cease
 All their little daily sorrows ;
 And your eyes will be their peace.

They will tell me that you died
 Ten score years and more ago.
 But in all their careful telling
 Where's the truth? 'Tis I who know,
 Little woman out of Holland.
 No sweet woman endeth so.

¹ In a portrait by Ravesteyn.

THE OPEN HOUSE

At the long road's edge it sits—

Long road that runs from the town.
The brook chants here, the gold bee flits,
And through the trees overshadowing
The saving sun looks down.

Spent all with dust and care

And Toil of the Months that are Ten,
Hither we come, from Here and There
And no more, now, say over and over
The weary *Must* and *When*.

The day is more than day

Breathed here, and more than night
This pause of the stars. All gay
Are brook and bee : and that far-lying
Low mountain is our land of light.

Here sitting, Two and Three,

For the beauty of no word
We wait, speak over what it may be,
Or listen, all silence, for the surpassing
Sweet strain another heard.

The old, the immortal tale—
Labour and love by day,
And peace by night, hope never to fail,
The dream, new-winged in our hearts, and singing—
All these we bring away.

And far away. But all along
The long road to the town,
Runs now a mute, unutterable song.
Our task we have—our Ten good Months.
And the saving sun looks down.

PETERBOROUGH, NEW HAMPSHIRE,
August 1908.

THE WORSHIPPERS

WHEN I am but a spirit and a voice
Singing unheard—when on the immortal seas,
Invisible like a bird, I go and come—
When days to me are all one breath of change,
A passing from light to light, an increasing joy,
And nights bring sudden, spiritual, far-off speech
Of long departed, unforgotten things,
Of hearts never found, of friends that still were true—
When *here* I need not sit, chained and inert—
Nor *there* travail all the golden hours away
At the old mortal tasks :
Ah then, when I am free, free as my bold

And pilgrim thought is now—like the happy air
Free to be gone—each hour to choose my stay,
Ah then, oh prisoned spirit that is my self,
We will go back to the temples by the sea.

Not there perhaps the gods of our desire
Will open to us their bright mysterious hearts,
Nor there nor anywhere in the visible world
The mortal soul overtake the wingèd dream—
Know himself satisfied : but there, at last,
In Pæstum, long since builded, fallen long since,
At the low shore of the luminous calling sea,
Where once rode ships from all the misty world
And thoughts from realms all infinite and serene ;
There where tower up the mighty columns still
Glowing with the light of clear innumerable dawns
Upon the plain—there we shall be more near,
Shall feel at our side the eloquent faint stir,
The breath, the touch, the longing and the dream
Of men who, like ourselves, have built in their hearts
To the God of every Race and every Clime.

DEPARTURE

OPEN your doors, my heart,
Jealously closèd and long !
Open with song.
There is one here who could not wish to stay.

How little our great love were—
How fallen, how grey—
In holding her
A bright, lost prisoner.
Open with song !
Speed her the outward path that is her way !

Open your doors.
For who should be less dear
Being gone away ?
My own love sends her out to live in the sun,
And I will make with you,
A haven for her to run
At need most fleetly to
From night and dark and the dew—
And set a light looking clear
Through the wide door, before the night is begun.

Brave, brave heart, open the doors !
Open quickly, lest we fail
In our hard tale !
How shall one be less dear, having gone away
With joy, and toward the dawn ?
This we have chosen, we say :
To come upon
Herself, still here, being gone—
And never to fail
Or miss her look of love on any day.

TO A LITTLE COMPANION

THOU art the sweet white page,
Whereon—will I or no?
I leave the imperfect story of my age,
Written down.—Will I or no?

Not altogether clear,
Nor sweet, as I desired—
Not wholly tender of heart nor wholly dear,
Not as my soul aspired!

Three gentle years are thine,
And mine are thirty-and-three.
And from thy innocence as over the line,
I have sailed to the burning sea.

And in my own despite,
My errors, my anxious age,
They breathe upon and darken the clear white
Of thy unburthened page.

TOWARD CHIOGGIA

UPON the water not a stir
Or sigh of any sea wind runs
To darken the limpid plain. Not once
Fails the old magic of the suns

For sailors going far from home.
The Lido's low green shimmering near
Is our one path of gossamer,
Glancing, far out, from sphere to sphere.

We follow, all at peace, and try
What world it is whereto we come.
The bridge, the spire, the mirroring dome—
Was it a city we sailed from?

Was there a land we left at noon
Down at the rim of this pale sky?
And if this beauty all were sky!
And we—glad spirits, drifting by!

We took a happy leave of time
Upon an hour men call the noon,
And set our sails, and found how soon
One puts the world away—how soon

This so serene and tender space
Receives men to its simple clime.
Here hearts have leisure for their prime
And every little wave talks rhyme,

And trips his dancing crown of light
Far out into that dreamy place
Where each tall sail with golden face
Takes up her gentle, homeward pace.

Henceforth—how wistfully we say!—
Long past the cool falling of the night
Our happy sails shall keep the light.
Henceforth they shall be woven bright,

Safely to carry our desire.
It is for little. A ship—a day
Of most pure silence, sailing as we may
Always upon a homeward way—

And at our side the one and two,
Come fleetly, as our dreams require—
Faces at which we never tire.
For all the rest the wind's soft choir.

Here, we say passionately, hearts might learn
What goal it is men travel to.
Not all the chattering market knew
Was half so simple and so true.

Tranquilly, here, there runs the clue
To the lost way for which we yearn—
The outward way that is return,
No less, from trafficking days and stern
To the first haven, where all's new.

THE LAST LETTER

WHEN I am dead
Then let this letter be sent
To him—who never knew.

With full, full hands dear one,

Oh the many women, waiting still when all is sped !

And heart strangely rich for all its living alone,

I waited for you,

Knowing you never would come.

Yet was he here—here hourly in my heart.

My best, my all, choicely I kept apart,

A poor perfume

From a poor flower—so I knew !

So little, so little it is that love may do !

And now, unspent,

Doubled and trebled many times these many years,

Now that its sum can make you no least debt,

I send it.

And may the pale lines tell truly the exquisite

Long joy of loving him !

Never in life had I any intimate power

Of comfort for you, never the gladdening touch,

The look to make content

When need was upon you and delight fallen dim.

*But a heavy hour
And lonely may come yet,
When you may yet be healed, knowing how much
A loving woman loved you—
Loved you.*

THE PRAYER

OH Thou whom some name Hope,
And some call Power,
Whom some, in their bitter need, cry to as Love—
Defend this hour—

This hour of doubt and storm,
Of seeking and pain :
Set me in its dark midst content, secure
Of one clear path again.

I know not who Thou art,
Thou in all hearts renowned,
Nor where, in the calm immensities of space
Thou shalt be found.

But oh, I call on Thee,
Having known thy swift release,
On Thee, the invisible, great and unknown God
Whose gift is peace.

THE NEW GODS

FALLEN—broken—so they lie
In mute ruin, white and stern.
And they left an empty sky
And no whither to turn.

I stood out at bitter gaze
And my heart it cried for truth—
For one goal that should replace
The golden creed of youth.

And within this place of doubt
One stepped forth, upon a day,
Flung the ancient banners out
Far upon the alien way,

Hailed the new gods—named them Work,
Named them Distance, Learning, Song.
Lives before them. Will not shirk,
And is hopeful, fleet and strong.

Hail to the new gods ! Where they stand
We must follow, and no more
Live within the father's land,
House upon the earthen floor.

Sweeten and darken—that will they.

They will brim and ban the cup,
Change to strange gods in a day—
But we set the new gods up,

Give them labour and desire,
Heed their farthest wandering beam,
Spend our strength, our faith, our fire—
But look for no return from them.

Gods are not faith nor constancy.

They are travellers as we are.
Past the horizons that we see,
A day's journey, runs the star

Of their going. To man's face
Never doth their light appear.
They have set the running pace.
Ours to follow and keep near.

Past the blackened out fires they made,
Twenty stormy noons ago,
Ours to press and to invade.
Godless doth no mortal go.

THE VICTORY

It was my Time. The old hour struck,
The ancient self without my leave—
The old impatience came to pluck,
How briskly at my sleeve !

And one stood crying within my heart—
 (It was not I)—“The strait is sore.
Thy strength is small. So yield. Thy part
 Requires of thee no more.”

Then to the god we do not know,
 Whose perfect name lies not within
Our speech, all speechless in her woe
 My spirit fled, crying—“This is sin.

“Against his coming many times
 Thou gavest a secret, golden power.”
Then sudden as the lark that climbs,
 I sang, and in that dolorous hour

I stood with an immortal strength,
 Looked out upon the dangerous way,
And singing trod its bitter length,
 Scatheless, as even a mortal may.

THE STREET

So many passing.
And each face wearing some lesser look than pleasure—
A look of youth long sped
And joys ungatherèd.

And ah ! the lonely eyes
Where love—ungiven, untaken—goes solitary
Upon a doubtful quest
With the brothers of unrest.

Are these eyes, then,
The common, grievous burden of all—these eyes
Of secret questioning pain
And little in life to gain ?

And is it we—
We from the many who dreamed of happily going
The untroubled way we choose
And no delight to lose ?

Oh soul ! No favour for us !
No freedom from task and toil and long desire !
Upon the arduous way
No favour. We will obey.

And if the golden hour
Slip from us soon and we, too, learn again
How little a time we have
Oh heart, the loves we crave,

Let us live hardily still,
Wearing, for faith, the old dream at the breast,
And in our eyes the light our love once wore,
Asking no more.

BATTLEGROUND

EVIL and Good and Love and Hate
And all the hosts they wrestle for—
Forward and back and early and late,
They wage their immemorial war,
With waste and wrath and woe pursuing
Like hard masters, greedy of toll,
Across the ancient battleground
Which is, alas, the human soul.

And sometimes, in a quick despair,
Half welcoming the alien power,
The bright field darkens, dulls the air,
And the old enemy takes his hour :
But oh the joy—the joy of the time
When love comes back, and brings the day
Sweet winds, a promise of grain, and blooms
Where late the storm-scarred meadows lay.

THE KINGDOM

THEY are the cities of my heart,
And lie in an imagined land,
Looking each to each, nor far apart,
And with a cool sea near at hand—
Tideless, with winds you never knew,
Whereof no mariner has the chart.

Not the first traveller idling there
Will find the kingdom I have made.
It springs in the perpetual air,
Nor is by any years dismayed.
I know that they were always young,
This tower, this grey and golden square.

The harbour it is Yverdon—
A little seaward town of dreams.
My sails to her fair shelter run,
Steering in by the down misting streams,
While the fleet shadow of one cloud
Climbs to Ravello in the sun.

The broad road from the harbour forth
Runs to the cities. Each is near,
Nyon and Elze and Meadow-worth,
And even the humble and the fair
Unvisited Placentia,
By her cool waters in the north.

The golden Wharfe my river is.
Above it on her peaceful hill
Whose sudden height no eye will miss,
Sits little, ancient Rapperswyl,
With all about the Hither Green,
Field of her simple pleasaunces.

And on the one tall tranquil tower
An overlooking seat commands
The valleys brightening from a shower,
The seaward turn of these, my lands,
The bay at bright Amalfi's foot,
The soft light changing hour by hour.

Oh still land, where my loves belong !
Oh land of peace and swift return !
A field-going peasant at his song,
A glancing lizard in the fern,
The gentle church upon the square,
And all the not too distant throng

Of little hill towns where they stand,
Each like a flower sprung in the light :
Enough this for my mortal hand
To treasure up in fate's despite,
Secure because no sea runs thither,
Nor any path—in any land.

I WILL TAKE THE ROAD WITH YOUTH,
THE BRIGHT COMPANION

MORNING was dulled,
The spring of living gone.
My feet went tamely to a plodding measure
Wherein all joy was lulled
And soberly looked upon.

These thirty and more years spread a poor treasure
Forth to my thought.

"Life so well dreamed of! Life fallen merely to this!
What mood of mine ever sought
Beauty from it?" I said. "Already the change is begun."

But as I stood
Brooding and alone,
Weighing idly, e'er I should leave it, each old honour,
Into my lagging blood
Crept the same charm of the sun.
"To the Road," it sang. "One road for all! But the
runner
At your side in gloom and shine—
Look well to him." And in some strange peace with life,
Answering, I sang from the heart, "That choice is mine!
Youth shall go with me. Youth! The bright companion."

I THOUGHT TO OUTRUN YOU, CARE

I THOUGHT to outrun you, Care.
There shall be a way,
I said, to divide your snare.
There shall be a place
Where never again your face
Will gloom out suddenly, shadowy,
Close to my own.

Never again to share
The gold and dew of my day
With the shadow that is your frown !
Nor feel the haste of your feet
Follow, invisible, fleet !
Nor hear your somber, compelling,
Dissonant voice at my ear !

And with all my wit I ran
And I seemed not far away
From the cool peace of my house,
From my friend of the tender brows,
When the anxious path ran clear.
Heart throbbing with the sweet
New rest, I breathed my fill
For one brave moment's span.
But with my pausing feet
I felt, unutterably still,
The Silence coming near :
Then looked about, all rapture and half fear—
And lo—I stood alone.

BEETHOVEN

MANY a long year ! Many a mile !
And the true way is lost.
The All-of-Living sums now no more
Than the strict and weary cost,

With Life, the Creditor, sitting by
And narrowly, while we pay,
Marking our coin against her compt
Punctually with the day.

Youth and his open, swift desire—
Love, the brave purposes
Running in the veins like a song of heaven—
We see these beauties cease

In the poor barter—feel the foot
Slacken from the bright speed
Of its first hope, and plod the measure
Life sets for Sorrow and Need.

Year upon year! Mile upon mile!
Blind going, and toward no end.
The wish, if won, then wished no longer
And little more hope to spend.

.

Yet on a sudden the path runs clear
At times. Almost I know
My truth when the great strange voice chants out
From long ago,

And from afar off—glorious voice
Going fleetly everywhere,
Under the fair cool stars of the night,
And across the fields of air.

The incomparable, the unperishing voice !
From doubt—from blinding pain
Chanting straight, as with an awakening cry,
To the brooding souls of men.

Is it a hundred years indeed
It has been upon the way ?
This news of a hope men cannot name !
Of a time—ah, who shall say

What golden season man hopes for,
With secret promises
Given and taken in thought to smooth
Life's round of little ease.

From ear to ear ! From heart to heart !
Toward the bright far off goal
It passes, and remains, and sets
A reason in the soul.

“Upon the way,” it chants. “The loving
The loss, the compt—these are
Proofs for good strength—upon the way.”
And the bright messenger

Passes, but soon, with face unveiled
Anew from doubt, returns—
Repeats his most divine strange song
For these so poor concerns

That troubled me. And over and again,
Never to be denied,
Voices the perfect, the passionate hope
That is life's secret bride.

And listening, at last, I catch the strain
And from my heart I cry
"The Long Path with No End. This is
Our immortality."

MUSIC

ALONE in the vast waiting hall I was
And thrice a thousand faces that were strange
They made the sea whereon my soul must range
Adventuring and alone. My spirit was
Muted and fallen. In one momentous pause
Deeply it hung. But suddenly all was strange.
Upon the alien sea arose a change.
A wind of balm from blessed isles it was—

For all together and with the one intent
Out of the void each singing instrument
Plucked the one perfect and immortal line.
Then all that was not—suddenly it was mine,
Yourself at this left hand, your breath, your eyes
Putting out with mine once more toward Paradise,

THE GARDEN IN RAVELLO

I.

It was the garden you had told me of—

High in Ravello, midway in the sun—
Garden for lovers—garden of pure love.

And it was I who hither came, alone,
Trudging the path as one who cometh late,
Trudging the path to a remembered sun—

Alone, and in the wanderer's low estate,
Two softly chattering, dimpled, bare-kneed boys
Playing my heralds at the ancient gate.

The old devices careful love employs,
Grey wall and cypress hedge and lodge of stone,
Made love secure against the market noise—

Secure for distance and the climbing noon,
Your garden—in Ravello—garden whereof
Long since you told me, midway in the sun.

II.

My little pair of laughters bare at knee,
I left them crowding to a sudden game,
And left beneath her ancient shadowing tree

Nodding again, the grey and watching dame.

No path about that garden but I knew—
For you had told me. Each was still the same,

A thread of white against the low fallen blue
Of hilly girt Salerno's blowing bay.
And each one as it wended took me through

The selfsame fields of tall petunia,
Where every white and pale and purple flame
Concerning you, O loved and far away,

Had some soft word, or nodded down the name
I must not ever speak save casually.
Thus to my dear and empty realm I came.

III.

And being secure in that kind element
Forth to the unbetraying airs I flung
The love within my spirit too long pent,

And paced all eloquent the long paths among.
One flower I took. And it was my farewell.
Down from my heavy fingers, down it hung

And toned no tone, like a mute fallen bell.
Chanting no more of joy, of love no more,
Having rung the last true word it had to tell.

That which Was Not what wishing shall restore !

On the low wall one passionate hand I put
And took that utter leave. My three and four

Straying low words, the garden to them was mute !

And you also ! Thus the bright paths along
And to the cypresses—the gate—with foot

Half turning, my lonely moment to prolong !

And as my dark boys sprang, untuned and spent
Down round our feet on Silence all intent,
My golden lines fell low of uncompleted song.

THE TIDINGS

OH little river in the rain,

It was near you, and in the night

That first we heard. . . .

And in the silence, *Never again,*

We felt our hearts saying, *Not again.*

And questioned dumbly of The Change.

Not the clear sky, nor this starlight,

Nor you, singing faithfully your soft word,

Could make our world seem less than strange.

And in the grey morning, when the rain

Fell like our tears, and the great hill,

Blue once, was shrouded in woe, our pain

Cried passionately for answer : *Where is*

The land ? How pass these silences

Moments on moment, hour on hours,

With the tender, unsaid words? It was then,
 Like a forgotten friend, singing still,
 Looking out we saw you—shining—shining—
 O little river in the rain!
 So, long before we ever knew,
 You shone in the uplands, so will shine
 And still be shining, grey and blue,—
 O river, dear river in the rain—
 Long past this little halt of ours.
 And suddenly into each other's eyes
 We looked—the truth sprang—and we knew.
 And *Ah*, we said, *it is the sign*.

PETERBOROUGH, NEW HAMPSHIRE,
3rd August, 1907.

PAST THE DULL ROOFS—THE SKY

Low roofs and sordid,
 And the same poor street
 Climbing still
 The well-known, weary hill!
 But oh, the radiant grey,
 The lovely, indescribable flush of day
 Where hill and morning meet!

The same little beauty,
 And labour trudging by,
 And the vain
 Truckle to common gain:

But hour by hour,
Lovely with light—like a forgotten dower,
Past the dull roofs—the sky !

Colour of hope,
Colour of June and the rose,
Cool with the dew
Or great with storm—spread new
Hourly with promises
Of good days coming—for the lonely heart it is
The book of unfailing joy that never shall close.

THE PORTRAIT

THE doors were locked an hour ago.
The light fades in the empty room
Where the great canvas hangs. Moonlike
The marvellous woman is, in the gloom.

I have come back—it is pure love
Again that brings me. And I stand
Filling my soul at hers. How warm
This hand will be upon my hand—

And the faint magic of this sweet breath—
My spirit it shall be, and my dower.
The one and two long hundred years—
They stay no longer than an hour,

And leave her, sitting as she was then,
Lips pausing in speech, the bosom astir,
The slender hand lying open—fair sign
Of friends upon the way to her.

No doubt is here—no poor delays.
A look speaks, a brave breath replies.
The loyal, unforgotten loves
In those fair, dark, unfathomable eyes

Bend generously to all request
That she receive one love the more.
Follows once more the imagined smile
As it has often fallen before

On one who loved her. And I cry
Within my heart, grown suddenly bright,
“How should she be without her friends—
Alone, and in this empty night?”

But with the thought, and as I mourned
Her solitude, an eloquent air
Crept fleetly by and sighing was gone.
Then, in my heart, I was aware

In what fair company I stood.
Faithful, invisible we come,
We who have loved her in all times,
And wait within this empty room,

And sit out the still hours with her.

There is a poet, and a king,

A hero of the hundred wars.

Here doth the minstrel pace and sing,

Here is a young, fond murmuring child.

And once a woman with wet eyes came

Calling her sister. For one so bright

There is no need to spell a name.

The falling dusk makes little gloom

Nor here will love be ever alone.

Still to us, listening, comes the clear,

The imagined, unforgotten tone.

Still the breath stirs, the staunch heart sends

The warm pulse forth to us who know.

And yet—how strange it is—the city

Saw the gates close an hour ago.

NO FRIEND—NOR LOVED—AM I

OVER the glad, the green land, you have gone,

Bright head bent low, none travelling too but sorrow :

While I, as if it were all another's pain,

Set my poor words and few against your bitter morrow.

O friend and loved, O living golden heart,
No friend, nor loved am I, unless I wear
Myself, this woe—dim out my sun—and leave
For you, who now bear all, some less and happier share.

SEA POINT, MAINE,
13th September 1907.

HERE—IN THE SINGLE HOUR IT LIES—

'Tis here begins the immortal way !
Not yonder at the unclosed gate !
But here, in the anxious time of day,
Where Evil and all the Sorrows wait
And tempt us to the long delay.

Here have I seen the clear path run
In a pure blazon, mile on mile,
Past Steep and Hard and Beat of Sun.
One woman—and her faithful smile—
They keep it. And you called *Undone*,

Oh, faint, faint heart : and all astray
You ran. *If life were otherwise !*
So, daily, you dimmed our perfect day,
Looked for a strange sign, far away—
While here, in the single hour it lies,
The one, the immortal way.

UPON A DAY—

UPON a day I quaffed
A bright and wreathèd cup,
And sang a round of songs,
And sang them over, and laughed
To see how in each one
My happiness brimmed up
And danced against the sun.
But it was *Tears* I heard.
And *Tears*, the ancient word,
My own heart seemed to say :
Tears are not far away.
Tears follow after songs.

Upon a day I wept
And heavy of heart I was.
I spent my latest tear
And Doubt sprang where I stepped
And showed me all sweet Time
Within his narrow glass,
And mouthed a doleful rhyme !
The sum of life is this.
And all returns to this.
And Joy—oh, craven delay !—
Joy found no word to say
My listening woe could hear.

A MOTTO

WITHIN thine own heart sit.

Ask no man's praise

But look well forth from it

Upon all ways.

Pray for direction still.

The true word know

And when, from the tender, silent, infinite Will,

It comes, thy days to fill,

Thy long, long path to show—

Be ready. And go.

A POEM IN PRAISE OF DEATH

IN the sky a blue, blue day

An eager wind in the air !

And a voice that chants at my heart

Be sure. Be glad. Come away

Form this imperious care.

Not here the goal is set
Nor here the runner crowned.
Be fleet, my spirit, nor fear
That new, diviner debt,
That fair untrodden ground.

At foot and dutiful hand,
At breast and lips and eyes
'Tis care that holds us fast.
Long time we serve and stand.
O heart be bold—be wise.

How should it be a fear
To leave the spirit's house
Where is our certain pain?
The wide path waits and here
We dully pine and drowse.

The Fields, the illimitable Seas,
The Snows and Storms and Suns
Are for our own soul's foot.
With them will be our ease
When the free spirit runs

Out from the gate at last.—
O halting soul, to yield
Unto this lovely change!
To let the lot be cast—
Be bold—and sure—and yield!

GIFT OF THE GODS—THE AIR

LIKE the hand of one dear child
Now grown and gone,
Like the white leaf of a rose,
Like the happy breath of a happy heart that knows
'Tis she love looks upon,—
So, often, after a rain,
The faithful air again
To the wet cheek out of the evening blows.

And like an untired heart
It stays : and tends
Upon our troubled sleep.
The cool of all the stars in the purple steep
Freely it spends :
And lingers still to brood
Like a mother in the burning summer of our blood
Where pain and desire the old long vigil keep.

And when, in some fair field,
The eager morn
Hath set the lists for us,
And marked the many places, thus and thus—
Like a far off summoning horn
By the tall herald blown,
To bid us arm and ride and prove our own,
We hear the loud calling wind, the swift, the valorous.

The waste and untilled sea,
The barren height
Beyond man's sowing, where
No briar roots, and steeper than a stair—
These for the free wind's bright
Invisible harvesting!
And over the bounty all the gatherers sing:
Praises! Praise to the gods! For the gift of the gods—
The Air.

THE POET'S HOUSE

I.

A HUNDRED houses
Set gloomily in a hundred streets
Are like this one—
The brick and the sober stone
Built narrowly, coldly to an even height—
Certain windows looking to the light
Of the deep street, a door
To the world—often closed. No more.
A hundred houses in a hundred streets
Are like this one—
Save for its vine,

II.

And the vine,
Out of so meagre earth,
Out of the drought, the dark, the weight of the stone,
Lifts joyously,
As if the world were its own,
This wonderful girth—
Lifts for a sign to men passing wearily,
Lifts to the little sun,
To the blotting of grey days, the winter, the storm !
And oh ! in the many, many Aprils, like the warm
Dear touch of a friend, how faithfully,
How beautifully is come
The green of the leaves : in the wind blowing tremulously,
Like a heart over-filled with song—
Fleeting like morning, like very youth, up the stone
Of the old house, tarrying long
At the wide window seats,
In waiting for other youth, looking out from any room !
A hundred city houses in their streets
Are like this one
Save for its vine.

III.

A rugged and lovely sign
Winter and summer it is !
For here,
Here in the city having need of such a spirit,
In the lagging, doubting, toil spent city, here

In one bright mortal breath
Joyously met, are the beauty, the kindness, the valiancy
We follow in dreams. Soul youth with not a fear
Of time's long thievery, joy in the difficult day,
Some proven hope for the Silence, the mystery—
Like a bright wine
Are these, upon lips waiting long for wine ;
In times of spiritual dearth
Like a bright wine
To brave men, trudging long upon the way,
Seeking hourly, hourly, the renewing faith
Courage for the strange road,
The fulfilling of the sign.

IV.

So gay—so grave a spirit !
Hardly of earth,
Hardly of this, our day—
Like a bright visitor it seems still to wear
The shimmering mantle of its Other-land :
Yet loving, withal, this land,
This ancient home of care,
Loving her beauty, her need, the flash of her wayward
powers
Fleet and unreinèd, upon their passionate way.
So wise, so ready a spirit !
Hardly of earth,
Come, and too briefly, to inspire this our day
With quick, immortal breath,

Spirit sunnier than these lands, spirit glad as the illimit-
able seas,
Already its memory, its brave presence is
One more of the dowers
Of beauty, honour and imperishable faith
That light, as a haven for the lost of any land,
This country of its stay.

THE PILGRIM

I DID not ask,
Weakly, a prop—a crutch—
Nor even one wise heart near.
These were not much
For doubtful feet
Upon a doubtful task,
With no path clear.

But my heart's cry
Went out upon the dark :
Set me, my Lord, a lamp—
One faithful ray to mark
Far off a living goal
Whither my steps may try
Through marsh and damp.

The valiant soul
Doth trudge his way alone.
This, Master, do I learn.
But not with woe nor moan.
Straight forward will I press,
Pay down the uttermost toll,
But thou, my Leader, if but now and then,
Let the Lamp burn.

THE POET

HIMSELF is least afraid
When the singing lips in the dust
With all mute lips are laid.
For thither all men must.
Nor is the end long stayed.

But he, having cast his song
Upon the faithful air
And given it speed—is strong
That last strange hour to dare,
Nor wills to tarry long.

Adown immortal time
That greater self shall pass
And wear its eager prime
And lend the youth it has
Like one far blowing chime.

He has made sure the quest
And now—his word gone forth—
May have his perfect rest
Low in the tender earth,
The wind across his breast.

THE SEA GOERS

I.

The New Found Land

BEYOND the far-running sailor's anxious ken
Secure it lay within the marching mist
And icy sentinelled seas. And where none wist.
And having gone thither none returned again.
Like an old legend ungiven to the pen
Were its wild chanting winds with none to list,
And the unseen brave height of Bona Vist',
The landfall, soon to be, of Cabot's men.

And still, all solitary to the view
It lies when far-blown travellers come in.
The lonely Top-sails o'er their seas of stone
Loom to the wind, and the wild caribou
Is unafraid his mighty wood within,
Where the deep Humber murmurs and ebbs alone.

II.

Placentia

Once from the mart, the sounding streets away,
 And from the traffic keen of men with men
 I passed : and found a distant isle where gain
 No more was the fierce purpose of the day.
 There the tall labourer follows, wet with spray
 His blue, cool path adown the windy main ;
 And strives, and sings for the morrow, and again
 At evening turns and seeks his darkening bay.

I made my own, a realm unfound and fair,
 The bare tall hills, the windy field, where ran,
 Safe amid many tides, the one plain street :
 And looking landward from my misty seat,
 Counted the wild blue waters, span on span—
 Saw the white sails slip in—and harbour there.

IF I HAVE KEPT MY HEART SWEET

IF I have kept my heart sweet
 As the brown field,
 Then all were mine—the winds along,
 The bird's returning song,
 The sowing and the young wheat
 And the golden yield.

If I have kept my heart sweet,
Sweet as the cloud,
Flowers a-many then for me,
All blowing tenderly,
Following all with still feet
And bright heads bowed.

If I have kept my heart sweet,
Sweet as the rain—
Rain of winter, rain of May,
Rain across the brightest day!—
Then mischances must entreat
My heart in vain.

FRIENDS IN THE HOUSE

THEY have never a word to say.
Each one turns a quiet back
And sits, a little monk in grey,
Or sober brown, or honest black.

Behind the guests of my desire
I make fast the outer door.
And lo! before the crumbling fire
These await one mute word more.

And when at dawn, from out my ease
Up springs some half-forgotten care,
At my bed's head, thinking peace,
Two and three the monks are there.

In the noon when traffic swims
Like a gulf about my brain,
One that has gone out with me
Divides with me the press and pain.

And he comes in with me at night
And says no word and makes no sound :
But sits within the candle light
And calls the gentle brothers round.

And from the crows, fallen low with time,
I have all kind and human looks,
And life once more sings out in rhyme—
The happy brothers are my books.

THE LOW, WHITE HOUSE

It is upon a gentle hill—
This little, solitary house.
Green of the south runs to the sill—
The poinciana's delicate frond,
The pale sword-grass : and just beyond
The wall, a tall old cedar wood
Bends down his darkling brows.

The silence of the place at times
Divides, and in a pleasant key
That half is silence, the soft rhymes
Of wind in the wood take up their song

Whereunto, musing, I listen long
Remembering how, by any path
It is not far to reach the sea.

A little, fairy country without,
Lying secure from time's rough news !
The serene distance all about !—
Within a woman—and gentle rule
Whereto I put my heart to school
In memory, to find the way
Of that bright patience women use.

There was a low seat at the door—
And thither, in secret, many a day
I make return, and sit an hour.
The quiet hill, the white low roof
They tenderly offer me reproof
For my poor haste, saying *Life is fair.*
The wise men linger by the way.

HAMILTON, BERMUDA, 1907.

CORINNA¹

LIKE a wind the tender verse
Blows unseen away ;
Seeks strange hearts and does not stay.
Has far spaces to traverse,

¹ Corinna was a Greek poet of whom no trace remains but her name.

And is immortal when the mortal clay
That bare it, one bright day,
Hath found its sable hearse.

Travels far and soon is known
No more. Within the air,
When we request, only a name is there,
A lovely mystery, mute, alone—
And long we wait, and follow, to seize the fair—
The vanished breath and rare
The measure of no tone.

At Tanagra have I stood,
And that gentle name
With so sweet, so lost a fame—
Often have I called aloud—
Corinna : And sometime an echo came,
And I ran thither. But ah, 'twas not the same,
And was in vain pursued.

THE MARCH ROBIN

I HEARD to-day
Deep in the empty wood
Where the wind mourned
And leaf and rusty weed fled soon away,
One far melodious pipe, one springing lay.
Before his time a robin had returned,
And shivering stood
Upon a blowing bough, all valiant and all gay.

That tiny heart and bold !
Far do his songs disperse
And where are they who find !
Not that the world is weary and is old,
And not the naked birches, white with cold
Prevented him. Still to the vanishing wind
The absent listeners,
Faithfully, over and over, the joy he told.

TRAVELLERS

To the new road, heart of mine !
Let the way be strange !
At the crossways one we left
Dearer than the morning light
Than the golden wine—
Knew how sore we were bereft—
Smiled upon the change.

So must travellers. But no more
That remembered way :
The piping boy we heard with him,
The green tree where we broke our bread
At the reedy shore ;
The climbing highway cool and dim
Where we did not stay.

Faint and fainter sound we heard,
Where the deep road ran,
At purple pool and meadow wide
Last beheld him springing down.
Stood with not a word,
Having Silence at our side,
And an empty span.

THE LANE OF WINDS

A GREENER than my Lane-of-Winds
Is not to find the world around,
Where, bowered deep against the noon—
Freed from the towns—the towns where was no June!—
I pace the merry ground.

The little lane is steep, and climbs,
And pauses at a blowing turn.
And frightened wood things slip away.
But oh, the city's Fearful—where are they?—
And hide among the fern.

None but the eager wind comes by—
The tireless dear wanderer.
To be my lord he does entreat—
O tender children in the burning street!—
And through the green we fare.

And up the steep and virgin hill!

And comrades we for this one day!

And breath for breath we press! And we depart!

But Dusty Foot and weary Patient Heart—

Where—where are they?

BY THIS I KNOW—

By this I know that I have grown less young
Since yesterday.

For when this morrow fair, the lark had sung

Above my door,

My heart was leagues away—

And sprang not up to meet him any more ;

But slowly came—

And wondering and reluctant all the way—

Trudging with weary foot as on a journey sore.

And when I came—and stood—his measure seemed

Wise as a thousand years,

Sad as a thousand more. 'Twas this, I deemed,

This very strain of his,

This song as bright as tears,

That fell like a pearl with Desdemona's bliss

When last Iago came,—

Sprang star like over Roland's hundred spears

And trembled on in Dante's unimagined kiss.

THE BALLAD SINGER'S PLOT

I MUST trudge and must be gone.

Winds blow in from far away—

White the road to look upon—

Sweet and wild the day.

Here for mornings sweet and seven,

Here it was my will to tarry—

Busy hand and bended knee.

The ancient earth was warm to me—

Brown and clean beneath my heaven.

Ripe the seeds my pouch did carry—

Double poppies from the sea,

Bells o' Canterbury !

Here I trenched my gentle rows—

Sang a verse for every one.

They must thrive in this sweet close,

I leave them to the sun.

Phlox and Cuddle-me-to-you—

Lads-first-love and Love-a-bleeding,

Fox-glove, many capped and gay,

The purple belled petunia,

MEN OF NO LAND

Larkspur ladies tall and blue
The windy dances leading !
Rains are fleet and mists are grey
On the day of seeding !

Here the beds for you to tend !
Blossoms many in a row,
Scents for you who stay to spend.—
Calls my road and has no end !
Breaks the Morrow—and I go !

POPLARS GREEN

My heart went out to find the spring—
Spring there was none.
No flower. And not a bird to sing—
Birches wintry white and cold—
Grasses grey and meadows old.
My heart went out to find the spring—
Spring there was none.

We passed along the blowing wood
Out to find the spring.
And nothing save the wind was good.
But soon we saw the poplars all—
And as a maiden each was tall,
And each was dancing where she stood
Out to find the spring.

My heart went out to find the spring—
 Long was the way.
But we found the fairy thing,
 It hid among the poplars green
 And whispered soft—and sighed between.
My heart went out to find the spring—
 My heart found the way.

THE CAMEO

SHELL the azure seas have made—
 Faithful tool and loving eye—
A heart at labour in the flowery shade,
 And we who come may buy.

Here for lire spare and few
 We choose the time of our desire ;
The immortal god has risen and breathes anew
 His fragrant altar fire.

Here Pan will pipe his careless tune,
 And Flora's veil be sewn with flowers,
And here Diana wear her misty moon
 And lead her dancing hours.

A Time more deathless than the rose—
 Whence, wandering, long since we came.
But him who makes this magic new, who knows ?
 He hath not writ his name.

THE RAINS AT BRAMBLEHEAD

RAIN upon Pautuckaway's
Four soft mountains—blue no more !
Rain on Tabor's misty face—
Rain on Watershore !
All adown the darkened west
Sweet rain makes her speed.
Sit—and watch the sunlight follow—
Sit with me at Bramblehead.

In the windy noon are we.
Rains they are not here.
Glancing one by one they flee
Over Northernmere—
Shadows that are warm and bright,
Seen and quickly fled.
Sit and watch their seaward travel.
Sit with me at Bramblehead.

Now the hills of Francetown
Toward the watery east !
Turning now and pacing down
To Valleys Nine at last !
Up along sweet Meadowworth—
At our feet and near indeed !
Veils of wet across our faces !
Blowing rains at Bramblehead !

STORM

I.

WIND and the mist,
Mist and the rain !
And night tarries long—
Long at the pane.
Where should be morning,
Morning exultant,
Morning the beautiful
Bringer of light—
Where should be morning
Here is but grey,
Stealthily gathered,
Sullenly clinging,
Brother of night,
Denier of day !
And ever again,
Mist past, beats the rain,
Pitiless, tireless,
Whipping and stinging,
Shouting in mockery,
Laughing in scorn,
Chanting some torn
And arrogant measure
Over men, playing the part
Loveless, alone.

And ever again,
Wind past, the old strain
With the old burden
Chanting still—long ago
Perfectly learnèd
But chanting ever,
Untirèd, unpitying.
Many a grey day long,
Many a night—chanting
Ever at my heart,
Ever at the pane.

II.

Oh, let me forth
Into the midst !
Sitting alone,
Housèd, ensnarèd,
Hands folding meekly,
Hope fallen low—
Sitting alone,
So, comes the moan
As of old, and the heartache,
The loss, the long weariness
Of an old memory.
Cruelly slow,
The heartache, the losing,
Cruelly long
To tarry—the memory
No more desirèd,

And I must forth,
Hands clasped with the wind,
The mist, and the wild
And untiring rain.
Brother of these,
Child of the north,
Hardy of heart,
Wondrous in spirit,
Where shall be pain—for me,
Where the old sorrow?
Here with the wind,
Joyously fleeting,
Here shall I leave you
Oh, most fleet sorrow,
Here with the rain,
Here in the mist,
Leave you most sad sorrow
Here and forever.

III.

Into the midst—
Joyously—forth!
And never alone!
For here runs the wind,
Hand clasping with mine,
Here the gay rain
And the motherly mist
Cherishing, hiding!
Never alone—

Child of the north,
Valiant in spirit
A laugh at the lip,
The thorniest way
I shall pace fleetly,
Loving the misty earth,
Loving the wild and bright
Dusk of the skies !
Forgotten—forgotten—
No more to name—
They who once sat with me,
Right hand and left hand,
Early and late.
Forgotten the weight
They hung at my heart,
The clouding of grey
They spread for my eyes.
All are forgotten !
And forward—and forth
Into the beauty
Of the grey world !
The sheen of the air,
The steep of the path
Over hills, the quick wrath
Of the wind, a dark splendour
Upon the lake's breast
Like silver and steel
Of old armour :—we wear
These all as a garment

IT IS THE FIELD, THE RAIN AND I 101

Of joy round the soul !
And still, at our hands, feel
The summoning touch
And clasp of the wind,
And pace with him fleetly,
And lustily run with him
Up the rough hills. . . .
And look, my heart, yonder—
Past the black bole
Of the last shadowy pine—
Yonder ! The hill's edge,
High land of our dream,
Hope's unfailing country,
Lies, yonder, in the gleam
Of undreamed-of skies,
And yonder—oh, brave heart look !
Yonder—the shine,
And the coming of day.

IT IS THE FIELD, THE RAIN AND I

Now is the secret of the day—
Waiting—and silences. The sky
Veils her enchanting face in grey.
The insistent world is gone. And here,
With breath, desire, with smile-in-tear,
Here are the Field, the Rain and I.

Who then will say he is alone
Because no voice—with the word—is by ?
This mute, returning, passionate tone
Fills up my heart. And in this air
An impulse runs of sweet repair !—
O Field and Rain ! And Rain and I,

Yours is the still companionship
Wherefor my soul needs not to try.
Life sets her sweet measure at my lip.
And what I am, I am. The more
Of Future needs no sighing for.
It comes—on a morrow that will be fair !
O Rain on the Field ! And Rain and I.

THE DAY

AND as I was sleeping, the returning flood
Crept rippling up, lapping against my eyes
In a clear summons : and the fair morrow stood
Without, her bright hand beckoning—“ Oh, arise
Good worker, gird thy strength on, and away !
The time runs fast. I am thy one new day.”

MORNING

To my high window,
Cool with the winds of night
And strange with stars,
Comes slowly

Out of the dark and almost past her hour,
The faithful wonder of the morning light
And sets my grave room glowing
Like a flower.

And I, long lying
Troubled with heavy dreams,
Feel at my lids
The loving
And lustrous summoning of old :
And wakening, suddenly all the young world seems
One colour of joy too deep
For heart to hold.

Gold at her forehead,
Gold at her radiant foot—
No meaner colour she wears
This day.
And I? And this too-often returning pain?
Ah, let me remember, and thou, brave sorrow, be mute,
How royally, yesterday,
She wore her rain.

NOW—THOUGH MY BODY BE GONE FROM
HOME

THERE was a time I travelled far
And left no thought behind.
Free was I as the fleet clouds are.
I ran out with the wind

To seek my world. No land was strange—
No season. The divine sunshine
Spun out my golden thread of change
And every city was mine.

The coin of youth I gave away !
The distances I spent !
I made a home in each new day
And there had my content !

But now, oh love, since you are come,
So little, so innocent and dear,
Now, though my body be gone from home
It is my heart is here.

THE MOTHER

A PLAIN sewn dress of blue—
And faded now,
Apron of some lost hue,
Spare cheek, pale brow,
No line, no look of her but told
Work done and work to do.

But the dark glowing eye
In the most fleeting space
Uplifted to mine, wrote ever, unutterably,
The new love in her face.
Then, having written, bent in sweet haste again
To the children, clinging by.

IN THE HOUR OF YOUR COMING, MY
LITTLE CHILD

OH brief and shadow-bright world,
Island of light in space of mystery—
In peril of soul and pain
Long travelling, we
Turn often from you, wondering, and again
From our delights turn suddenly, with the vain
Question of old craving answer from silence kept utterly.

Where the light ends we know not :
Know only how strangely near the place, when sore
With unfruitful toils, the heart
Admits as never before
These doubts, quickly coming to dull its little part
Between the Whence and Whither, and sits apart
To muse on an unknown land lying dark beyond an
invisible shore.

But the secret faith we keep,
Faith too far hidden in the heart for speech or name—
It sprang like a golden flower
Into a flame
Of Certainty, Delight, in the single hour
Of your coming, my little child, bringing your dower
And mine from the dark, belying its haunting fame
With your eyes, golden still and joyous, from the glory
whence you came.

THE SIMPLE FIELD THAT I SHALL BUY

THE simple field that I shall buy
With my four gold pieces—
I have it clear within my eye—
Green as a marigold leaf is
In spring, when every leaf is new—
And from the road's dull travel climbing
To breeze and sun and silences—
And sprent and pied with blue.

And here, with every bright rain wet,
My colour always shall be—
The great, sweet-breathed, pale violet—
And the tall blowing chicory
Like one lost, slender, windy tower—
And yonder, on the last pale levels
A lovely mist, risen faithfully—
The blue-eyed grass in flower.

To hills I shall look far away
And to a running river's brim,
But it is here I make my stay.
Here chants my quiet morning hymn,
Here are Desire and Renown ;
And here, in the windy field down lying,
My blowing grasses set the rim
Of all my world and all I own.

THE CHOICE

AND Life with full hands came,
Austerely smiling.
I looked, marvelling at her gifts—
Fortune, much love, many beauties,
The deed fulfilled man ponders in his youth,
Gold of the heart, desire of the eyes come true!
And joyously
“With these,” I said, “with these, indeed,
What spirit could miss delight?”
And paused to dream them over.
But even then
“Choose,” she said.
“One gift is yours—no more,”
And bent that grave, wise smile
Upon me, waiting.

OH, HEART OF TWENTY—ONCE MY HEART!

FROM the sun's rise how long it was
Until his golden end—years since.
Each day was then a broad domain
Wherein a young child like a prince
Built daily his palace up again.
Now fleeter than a blowing vane
'Tis hand in hand they close and pass.

And now—no more a prince—I sit
Like some far wanderer. The round goes by
Unfolding, noon and night and dawn.
Sometimes I think that it is I—
Again, seeing how the change has grown,
I wonder, as the line pools on,
What he may be that walks in it.

Daily he passes—out and in—
Along the brave throng of the street
And to the well-arrumoured house;
But has for dusty anxious feet
And for his pleasure toker brown.
And still it stings— and my heart knows
’Twas not my very self was seen.

Oh, Heart of Twenty—once my heart!
Oh, Prince of Devils and Lord of Death!
Come back—and lend me for my task
That old, delighted merry breath.
All in your gift I boldly ask.
Unbind me, Twenty, this hard mask!
Let me be young. And live my part!

THE RAINS OF SPRING

Never man so bleak
Never man so grey
And my feet that would be gone
Pounce upon the way

Mire and moss and dripping run—

There's the path to-day.

Not a flowering field to seek —

Nor a shade to stay.

Broad and tender sky !

Strong and saving sun !

Your banishment is very long—

Never will be done.

But we tried a faithful song

Out of hope and sorrow spun,

Paced the drowning meadows by—

Leaped the deep pools and the run.

Rain the only sound !

But where the wide field lay

Most submissive to the rain—

There—and e'er we turned away—

The long path proved it was not vain.

One purple blossom, young and gay,

Beside the dripping rock we found—

And nodding in the wind away.

TO A STRAIN FROM BRAHMS

LONG ago

I loved you—very long ago—

Since when you have been, I know,

Somewhere upon this loneliness of earth,

And now—no more a prince—I sit
Like some far watcher. The round goes by
Unfailing, noon and night and dawn.
Sometimes I think that it is I—
Again, seeing how the change has grown,
I wonder, as the line plods on,
Who he may be that walks in it.

Daily he passes—out and in—
Along the brave haste of the street
And to the well-accustomed house ;
But has for duty anxious feet
And for his pleasure sober brows.
And still is strange : and my heart knows
'Twas not my very self was seen.

Oh, Heart of Twenty—once my heart !
Oh, Prince of Doubts and Lord of Death !
Come back—and lend me for my task
That old, delighted merry breath.
All in your gift I boldly ask.
Unbind me, Twenty, this hard mask !
Let me be young. And live my part !

THE RAINS OF SPRING

NEVER rain so bleak !
Never rain so grey !
And my feet that would be gone
Pause upon the way.

Mire and moss and dripping run—

There's the path to-day.

Not a flowering field to seek —

Nor a shade to stay.

Broad and tender sky !

Strong and saving sun !

Your banishment is very long—

Never will be done.

But we tried a faithful song

Out of hope and sorrow spun,

Paced the drowning meadows by—

Leaped the deep pools and the run.

Rain the only sound !

But where the wide field lay

Most submissive to the rain—

There—and e'er we turned away—

The long path proved it was not vain.

One purple blossom, young and gay,

Beside the dripping rock we found—

And nodding in the wind away.

TO A STRAIN FROM BRAHMS

LONG ago

I loved you—very long ago—

Since when you have been, I know,

Somewhere upon this loneliness of earth,

Too dear for a haven or a name,
Child of the fleetest air—
Among all those who inherit
The old unrest, a fair and wandering spirit,
You have been passing, I know—have come—and gone—
And where there has been one
To love you and to hear,
Him you have touched again with hope and the wand of
flame.

.

And when
The music sprang again
To-day to a living joy—"Perhaps that strain
Will come," I said,
And joyously lifted my head
To pace this lovely open country of song.
No following is long
When the one bright invisible voice leads on.
Winds and the light were there in every string
Bidding me wait.
And scarcely breathing I listened, and said, "I wait——"
But said again in my heart, "It is late—too late—
The bright path nears the end—the music soon will be
done."
It was then,
Then as a soul might sing
Mutely and to a mute far answering mate—
It was then you came.

THE LABOURER SINGS OVER HIS SPADE 111

Certain as the morning star, sweet as the sun,
You trembled and shone, and sang of living and sorrow,
Of change, and the yesterday that is no to-morrow,
And of the imperishable hope that keeps the world.

THE LABOURER SINGS OVER HIS SPADE

I LABOUR not for you,
O standing strangely by
To judge me right—and wrong—
To stare away my song,
And leave no better than a sigh
The while my song is new !

I labour for My Own—
The soul that sits within—
The song upon my lips.
'Tis needy when it slips
Out to your weary din,
Along your ways of stone.

I labour for my love
And none knows where is she,
Nor how she chose my heart
And no more does depart,
But houses tenderly.
I labour for my love.

O hearts that love your love
Nor bargain for return !
O hearts that love your toil
And ask no sweeter soil,
For hope to spring and love to learn—
O hearts that toil—and love,

Come shoulder now with me
The mattock and the spade.
The lowly lights of home
They signal—and we come ;
We wish no praises said.
We laboured joyfully.

MY LOVE REQUIRED ME THAT I SERVE—

My love required me that I serve—
And called *Be near*. And said *Have care*.
But I saw pleasure everywhere,
And claimed my own and did not then deserve
Love's gentle recompense—how ample and how fair !

Nor what surpassing gifts there lay
Invisible in my empty hand—
Nor how I had love's open land
Fair in my eyes for him—'twas many a day,
With my unwitting heart, e'er I could understand.

Not in my labour lay the grace—
 The magic line that spelled all clear.
 Not so : but that my soul was near,
 And sang to be in one belovèd place,
 That all my thoughts were his and held their vigil
 dear !

A PRAYER TO THE LORD OF LIFE

O LORD of Life, let me not be with those
 Who house in vain and ineffectual Thought,
 Who sit within and look forth all distraught
 If on a sudden the placid door uncloses.
 Strange in the world they know not whither blows
 The timely wind of change—nor ever caught
 The marching step—the great goal leave unsought,
 Content with daily wage and perishing rose.

Be mine the way-faring dream, the open heart,
 Whereto no Pain nor pitiful Need shall come—
 Speak faint to sober welcomes, and fall dumb.
 Be mine a soul more eager than the dart
 To glance and to be gone, to mend the strife
 And richly to endure the arduous hours of Life.

COMMEMORATION POEM

THE FOUNDING OF ERASMUS HALL, 17TH NOVEMBER 1787

SUMMONS without a name,
Flame that no eye may see,
Touch that no man felt as it came
Asking his constancy.
In the hearts of men it burned
Long since, and continually
It lightens and lifts in promise,
Over weaknesses wept and spurned,
Over courage won hardily
Making hour by hour the immortal claim
That we follow, cast all behind us and follow—
Follow the lead of the flame.

Man's poor self still must crave
The serene and ultimate sight,
And must in desire outbrave
The dull heart, the weak body, the night.
Through the long dusk of his dreams
A wonder flooding of light
Far off, sets a mark for the journey :
And he takes the path as it gleams

Along fields of stubble and blight,
Past Doubt dwelling dark in his bitter cave,
And toils on, footsore yet ever unweary,
With rain-worn mantle and knotted stave.

It was so the Seekers of old
Kept watch night long with a star
Of flame on the dusk and gold
Of the land. Very lustrous and far,
Lighting the steep of the hill,
It summoned men forth to war
On the easy sloth of the spirit
Too long sufferèd ; and still
The shining spaces unbar
Their beauty, when men awake and are bold
As men, in request of the infinite wisdom,
The wonder not to be told.

Faithful these unnumbered years
Steadfast, walking alone
On the way, pass the militant seers.
Taking no prize for their own
Save the overcoming of doubt,
Chanting sweet tone on tone
A joyous faith in their vision,
Carving their beauty out
From the waiting white of the stone,
Glad when the great dusk somewhat clears
And out of the lovely, never-lost light
The desired answer nears.

Countless, name upon name,
No record, no memory of all
Who ran with the torch of flame !
Past the scourge and the cup of gall
To the uttermost needy shore
Their light fled on, out of thrall :
And the overmastering beauty,
The power and wonder it bore
Enkindled in palace and hall,
In huts, and among all men, the same
Fire of ardour, flame of desire,
Fear of the dullard's shame.

Names we hold for a charm
And utter with reverent breath.
Names to bid hearts thrill warm
Where they stand, outliving death—
Phidias, Sappho, Homer—
Vain is the fading wreath
To crown the abiding presence—
Columba, Augustine, Alfred,
Men of the west who bequeath
With glory of soul and might of arm
Themselves, for light courageous, continual,
Light to outlast the last great harm.

Dead this many a year—
Shakespeare with whom we dream,
Dante with whom we fear—
Yet when did they pass the stream ?

And when passed the man who flung
 Learning like largess of gold agleam,
 Page upon printed page to all peoples?
 When last has Schubert sung
 Strains bright as the day's own beam?
 And Browning—does he not pace near,
 Manly and great, when men for a little
 Grow weary and whisper of fear?

And the lofty spirit of one
 From an idle land the while
 Lying pleased with its Little-done—
 How it came, long since, many a mile
 Westward through malice of mist and foam
 To the seaward-looking isle!
 And the Name, the living Name, Erasmus
 Makes here more generous home
 For a people in long exile—
 Gives soul to the great life daily begun
 Anew, never weary, never dull, never ageing,
 From splendid father to splendid son.

And here the light lives, never dimmed
 These many and faithful years:
 Long since its glory has brimmed
 The first lamp over, past fears
 And foes and ills as they came.
 And still to all listeners
 Loyal men and loving women
 Jealously guarding the flame,

Proclaim the treasure it bears,
Setting free the truth, glad eyed, young limbed,
And working all, master and learner together
For truth—glad dream that the world has hymned.

Like children whose brief times pass
In little labours, men go
With winds and birds and the grass
And great flowers all ablow,
Across the unending field.
They gather the blooms they know
But still come an hundred others,
Nameless and lovely, and yield
The sweet breath, the fair colour aglow :
And an hundred, lovelier still, surpass
Those that they hold with wonder—and beckon
And call, far off, in the blowing grass.

And we follow, daring the stain
Of the journey ; garmented well
In patience, careless of pain,
We follow, impatient to tell
Straightway and far abroad, what truth
What wisdom, beauty, delight we spell
Out of the infinite closed book
In the simple lessons of youth.
But ever one more sentinel
Keeps watch on the way ; and who shall attain
The end of the difficult, beautiful road
And count as his own the last bright gain ?

Summons without a name,
Flame that no eye may see,
Touch that no man felt as it came
Compelling his constancy.
Still doth the body obey,
Or fleetly or laggingly,
The call of the eager spirit ;
And out toward the ultimate day
Where man's poor mind shall be
Made perfect forever, past frailty, fame—
With toil, with joy, with infinite yearning
We follow the lead of the flame.

WISHES—
FOR TWO WHO ARE TO WED.

THE SONG OF THE LOVERS

IN the days so newly past
Winds and waters and the sun
All ran with us, singing always,
Many together and one by one,
What is love? and What is love?
Travelling dully still, we heard
And made answer : *What is love?*
We do not know the word.

But they followed, constantly,
Chanting still the strange, sweet name,
Till love suddenly, at a look,
In a moment, came
Close to the heart. And *What is love?*
Still we hear, and answer—so :
Love? It is too strange—too dear
And we do not know.

THE WIFE SPEAKS

My hand was pledge of it all :—
What the lips could not say,
What the eyes might not look—
My hand was pledge of it all.
Services worthy the strong,
Loving to be life-long,
Promises never confessed
But secretly sweet to pay—
These are for you, who took
My woman's love to your breast,
These—and all else—for you.
And oh, the love will be true !
My hand was pledge of it all.

THE HUSBAND SPEAKS

LITTLE, beautiful, very dear,
Desired these long, long days
By love self-doubting, strangely grave.
How is it you are come so near ?
How is it that I may say " Mine
She is, this dearest lady, mine—
Woman and wife, austere sweet."

For what am I who speak this praise
That I possess? The marvels you gave,
The soft-touching hand, the joyous feet,
The other gift coming, too bright to name—
I knew not of them till you came,
Little, wonderful, very dear !

THREE HANDS

LITTLE hand warm in my hand,
Frail as the flower of a lily,
Sweet as the whitest, sweetest rose in the land.

'Tis a little, fairy space
To hold so much that is love—
All of a woman's heart for all her days.

But she has no more to seek
After one look of her eyes
And one brief, wonderful touch of you—at her cheek.

Strange that we never knew
Until you were here, what store
Of love and rapture and dream we had for you,

Dear little gentle hand,
Close in shelter of mine,
And my hand, too, in a stronger, tenderer hand.

THE LITTLE GARDEN

MOTHER went out to the garden close
And there she found a little white rose.
And here it is
And it is this (*Pulling the little round nose*)
And mother gave it a fine big kiss.

Mother went into the garden fair
And found two violets sweet and rare.
And this is one
And this is one (*Touching the eyes*)
All fresh and blue in the morning sun.

Mother went out by the garden bed
And found two roses round and red.
And one is here
And one is here (*Pinching the cheeks*)
And never roses were so dear.

Mother went into the garden light
And found a tulip new and bright.
The warm wind blows
The lips uncloset (*Kissing the baby lips*)
And sweet is the speech that mother knows.

Mother went out to the garden wall
And found a lily white and tall.
And soft it stirred
And soon it heard (*Pulling the pretty ear*)
Full many and sweet a loving word.

SUPPER TIME

My little patience went away
Last night.
I was so hungry and my cup
Nowhere in sight.
I couldn't somehow help but cry
Till it came right.

But mother sat me in her arm
And held me close
To kiss, and says that sometimes too
Her patience goes ;
But that a smile would call it back,
I think she knows.

My supper was so cosy and warm
I could not keep
My eyes wide open at all, except
Sometimes to peep
At mother, looking down, and then I think
I was asleep.

WHAT THEY CALL ME

I AM Baby-Bright-Eyes.

When the morning climbs

Early, early up the skies

I am there betimes,

With eyes brighter than the light

And blue as any skies

To see the cloud ships come in sight—

All red and morning-yellow and white.

I am Baby-Berry-Cheek

And I sit all day

Playing in the gay May wind

Till you think I've been away

Through the meadow, over the hill

Where the three-leaf's in the grass

With the berries under still

Waiting any baby's will.

I am Baby-Many-a-Smile

And many a one have I,

For who is gay and who is grave

And who is passing by?

How could I keep a smile that might

Be cheering all the while?

And all my best are to delight

Mother's good-morning and good-night.

Every name begins with dear.
And you never knew
How many names there were to give
Till I came to you—
Some for love and some for fun
And some just sweet to hear,
But oh, it is the early sun
That makes you say the prettiest one.

THE SIMPLE TASK—THAT IS MY LOVE

It is the simple tasks we love,
Not the far off and difficult end
Where to, all troubling, we move :
But whether a riband white or blue
For the small, sunny, glancing head—
How the new meal may fair be spread
For love—the flower that will be new
To love—these are the heart's concerns,
The daily, gay, plain tasks we love.

And if Great Praise came to approve,
At last, that long ambitious task,
How even should Praise keep pace with Love?
His All is greatly less than this :

For now, to my heart, comes Little Youth—
New words, all love, from his warm mouth—
His frequent, innocent, laughing kiss.
For these I pay with all I have.
The simple tasks—these are my love.

FIRESIDE

WITHOUT, the hurrying white of snows
Makes blank the empty pane,
And the plaint of the pilgrim wind as he goes
On journeys always vain.

Without, the sweep of the cold, the length
Of the lonely, difficult road,
And the grey storm marching in his strength,
Plying his sleety goad.

But oh, within there is evening fire—
The wide, home-welcoming room,
And the sweet look of man's desire
To light against the gloom.

And not a flash of the flame but tells
Of the little player, lately gone—
The blocks, the ball set gaily with bells,
The two great chairs and a little one.

And oh, the return when nights are wild
To the place of love and little care,
Where still the voices of mother and child
Are sweet upon the air !

Whatever the day brings that is bright
How little could we miss
The evening quiet, the warm firelight
And the little, half-learned kiss.

The touch of hands, the sleepy kiss—
Oh, blow, and blow, good wind,
For we have travelled far, and this
Is what we came to find.

POEMS FOR A BAY OF
ISLANDS

TANCOOK POPPIES

AN island thrust on bitter seas—

Low houses, spare and plain and white—
The ribbed stone lying grey as prison keys—
The windy merciless light !

And towns are dear and far away

And high roads, running, but a name.
The boats must find anew each misty day
The path whereon they came.

But still the mid noon's royal claim

Is here—where most the fields are poor.
The square of faithful garden spends its flame
Beside an humble door.

And scarlet poppies spring and nod

And burn against the grudging stone,
Where their poor mistress in her quilted hood
Tended—and dreamed—alone.

THE MORROW

FOND feet upon the grass.
A trail across the sand.
Few words—that breath—and pass.
And tides are near at hand.

They blot the footprints four
And the grass springs wet with rain.
And wet and sweet and new the empty shore.
Time takes her road again.

Before the mist and wind
The two have gone away.
And one must pace the sea marge long to find
The lights of yesterday.

FISHERMAN'S WHEAT

HIGH upon the cliff's bare head
A frugal acre they had set
In mist and wind and daily wet,
In sunlight chill and quickly fled.

A traveller craving rest I lay
Upon the rough grass at its edge.
The gulls swam dizzy at the ledge,
The morrow and its sea were grey.

And all the delicate wheat was green
And trembled in the August cold,
And far and far indeed the fields of gold
No fisherman has seen.

The sea wind murmured, creeping by,
But that poor harvest seemed to sing,
And sprang, a hardy hopeful thing
Between me and the sky.

SEA LAVENDER

HERE lay the perilous grey sea
And there the anxious minded land.
And still the gale at the pebbles and the sand
Was tugging manfully.

And if the fields were green not we
Here trudging to the wind could know :
And deemed far wandering Spring too wise to sow
Her flowers against the sea.

It seemed a mist the storm had blown
About our feet, so pale it grew.
It glanced and turned. And briefly it was blue—
Then grey as every stone.

Fast rooted where the boulders were
And breasting out the August gale,
We found our only flower. It was the pale,
The brave sea lavender.

NEW ENGLAND PICTURES

INNOCENCE—BLOWING IN THE WIND

THE little sober field dropped down—
And down—from the low murmuring wood
To the grey river, and where I stood
The plaintive grass was thin and brown.
Far on, upon the windy hill
Some little mist of green went by
And soon was gone, unwilling to try
So bleak a May and chill.

But suddenly I was all aware
Of Spring, for as I stept, there ran
About my foot a fairy clan,
And tugged against the boisterous air.
The frosty sun, the time unkind
Forbade that flowers should be bold,
But here—blue, white, and palely gold,
Was innocence, blowing in the wind.

THE ROAD—AND LOVE

I SIT by the great grey road,
And the great grey road runs by
Over the hill and down the hill, and into the quiet
wood,
And beyond the deep wood then
To the places of many men.
See—yonder one plods the long way of the road—
Not you, O Love—nor I.

We sit under our great tree,
Cool tower against the noon,
And the men may come who will, and the men who will
may go,
Wearying, wistful of eye,
Looking forward still to try
Where pleasure is and love may be.
Dear one, our haven came soon!

And here in the shade and the sun—
The morning wind coming by—
Here in the low brown house with the yellow flowers at
the sill,
From dawn to dusk we keep,

And from dusk to dawn—sweet sleep.
And who would follow the great road on?
Not you, dear Love, nor I.

CHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE, 1906.

THE NEW ENGLAND FIELD

LONELY and virgin she has lain
From the old pilgrims' time till now,
Reaping no harvest from the rain.
Here men never venture with the plow,
The rock runs like an ancient shield
Before her steep, forbidding brow.

As in a bleaker Italy,
Dark, straight-growing savins pierce the wind.
The juniper and the barberry
Take what scant rootage they can find.
And comes the rain—and goes the rain—
There runs no springing seed behind.

But once, upon the chosen morn
Of the year, I caught her secret thought—
Her fairy purpose. Better than corn
And wheat was this. The field had caught
Heaven's meaning for her. The rain ran by :
And all her lovely store she brought.

I could not step because of flowers ;
And yellow and white and gold and blue,
And golden again, for these brief hours,
They spun their gossamer colours through
The hardy green. A cloud, wind-torn,
Spread a bright shadow and made all new.

Under the hill a deep brook sang—
A sudden bird began her climb
To heaven. Beyond a white birch sprang
And whispered soft, perpetual rhyme.
Here have passed by the Invisible Sowers
Whereof the grey field knew the time.

THE WHITE TREE

YONDER by the fallen sill
Where all day are beat of sun,
Plaint of wind and call of bird,
But no spoken word—
Yonder on the woody hill
Where the steep roads run,

Faithful to the very hour
Springs a sudden lovely white
Like a low cloud
On the wood—
A living apple-tree in flower,
Ethereally bright.

Scent of gardens—mint and musk,
Cattle crowding to the bars,
Human stirring, slow and mild,
The calling of a child,
An early candle in the dusk
Winking at the stars—

Vanished all—forgotten quite—
Gone as if they never were,
From the hill's broad wilderness—
The past labours and their peace
Tarry in no more than this—
A sudden fleet, and lonely white,
Blown against the fir.

THE CROSSWAYS—NOTTINGHAM

SOUTH to North and East to West
From the marshes, from the sea
At whose grey and anxious breast
Storms cling lustily—
Out of murmuring hemlock gloom—

Many a misty water past—
To the hill at last,
To the wind and to the light,
Climbing faithfully and bright
Climbing do the highways come.

Houses ancient, houses four,
Long time keep the tranquil square,
Low of beam and broad of floor.
All the youth were there
That should dwell in Nottingham—
Keep the flowers about the pane—
Sheave the yellow grain—
Have the evening lamp alight—
Ah, but the two roads were white,
Running down from Nottingham!

From the upper pasture wall
Hills beyond the bluest crest—
Violet following valleys all—
One soft pipe in the west!
And the young in Nottingham—
They harken. And they slip away.
And whither none can say.
But the roads are long and white,
Dropping, winding in the light,
Down from lonely Nottingham.

THE COMMON

IF but that ancient Puritan
Might walk the green that once he made,
And hear the alarmèd air, and scan
The amazing change, and try the lofty shade
Of these surpassing elms, where many worlds invade !

Would that strict heart, that lip austere,
The brow that rayed a righteous pride—
Would these grow gentler, being here ?
That ample mantle—would it open wide,
And fold, all brotherly, the stranger to his side ?

Now twice within his sober day
The factory whistles taunt the air.
And twice along the dusty way,
In cruel haste and panting to be there
The alien thousands pass, bent to this newer care.

And now at twilight on his green
The many take their simple ease,
Chatter, and troll a song between :
And infants slumber deep on weary knees ;
And dark lads wander by and hope their maids to please.

The slow round of incessant feet
Drones past—the faun-like children sprung
Shrill from the dusk. Across the heat
By men, far off, a deep stornello is sung.
A woman to her one child croons low in an unknown tongue.

From Italy they have come—and Greece—
From Syria and Portugal
And ports of ancient golden seas,
And their unknown melodious speeches all
Surge fast to his empty ears—one long, overmastering call.

He cannot hear. Their dreams, their cares
Are alien and mute to him.
And they, the laughing dark strangers
Fear not his mighty look, austere and grim.
He moves invisible here, undreaded, past and dim.

But one compelling wind of change
The while he stands and does not heed—
Has blown his mantle wide : and strange
And poor, the wanderers gather in their need—
Bring him their toil—and wait—more patient than the seed.

The little food, the labour long,
The hour of sun to end the day—
For these they pay with light hearts and a song,
And watch this foster world, and fold away
The scarlet shawl, the purple dress, the apron wide and
gay.

They nurse the daring, new desire,
And love the stern toil while it drives,
And near the Puritan's white and lofty spire
Each land sets up the cross—and there it thrives—
And to its peace they turn, with just laborious lives.

SONNETS IN THE CITY

NEW YORK CITY, 1910.

FROM A CITY WINDOW

WE mask our windows richly in the town,
Lest, looking out, too far our souls should stray
Long e'er she came to us our sovereign day
Her beamy mantle hath dropped sadly down,
And mixed her happy glances with the frown,
The haste of streets that are forever grey.
Our cool horizons are how far away—
How far the winds from open meadows blown.
Yet here, where close the anxious gables throng,
Here at your sill the campanile springs,
Finds the new morrow perfect as the rose,
Sows that clear flame our bitter airs along,
And for our city hearts, all muted, brings
Vision of Lombard plains, soft bells, and vineyard
rows.

THE CHURCH IN THE CITY

I STAND the waif of old long changed desire,
At the abandoned portal. Faint and few
Are all the steps that seek if it be true.
The thousands pass. And mighty swims and dire

The city's passion. Heavenward still the spire
Soars up, but still the massy cliffs pursue—
A darkling cloud. All's lost of gold and blue
In every windowed angel's fair attire.

Soon will it step from this dear, ancient place,
And soon be known no more. Not ours the race
To keep this honoured sign upon the square.
For us no soft belled peace—no minster tower,
Like a grey mother, who will claim an hour
Out of our haste for Faith—for Thought—and the
blowing Air.

THE STREET CORNER

THUS do we choose the monarchy of Noise,
With hourly some new Master shrilling by—
Black trains, at speed, across a smoking sky—
The piercing summons of the paper boys.
Here men have eyes intent on dearer joys—
Far to be sought. Here caverns pant and sigh,
And break their stony hearts. And here 'tis high
In the wind that workmen keep their swimming poise.

Forgot were field and fruit and valley green
If in the turbulent wild we had not seen
How the poor orangeman—with wares of gold
And loyal purple, dewy sweet and cold—
Sang at his kindly task, nor wished it done—
Bore in his eyes sweet Italy's unobscured sun.

TO SEE THE TOWN MARCH OUT, AND
TRAMPLE CLOSE

AND this, O sorrowful, was once the hill.

Straight to the dawn her singing pines uprose

And caught the light. And long past evenclose
Kept the bright wonder. Was there then no thrill
Of coming woe—to hear the whistles shrill,

To breathe this smoky taint that clouds and blows,

To see the town march out and trample close
Upon sweet country's green and shadowy sill.

And now the gravel men! Boldly they come.

Against her gentle, round, her dewy side

With rattling tool and waggon they make war.

At the bitter edge a tall tree slips to its doom.

The levels hurry forward blank and wide,

And following these the low spare houses of the poor.

THE CITY OF THE TOWERS

ONE tower more doth now attempt the wind,

And call the clouds about her swimming height,

And straight to noon depart, a pilgrim bright,

Her dwelling in the untravelled airs to find.

Far down the murmuring harbours and behind

Among the lands, at folding down of night,

She flings her summons, light on beamy light—

The Marvellous Futures to the Valiant Mind.

And we, the pigmy lords, we trudge below
These deep resounding streets. But as we pass
Something befalls our pride—leaves our hearts
dumb.
The hush of Stonehenge, ruined long ago !
The steps of Paestum—deep in blowing grass !
The three fair columns by a street in Rome !

THE BUILDERS

By what men builded in the after age
So will their race, their prides, their loves be known
As princely or as mean. The voiceless stone
Lying on voiceless stone will still engage
The passion of the dreamer and the sage
Years hence ; the secret hearts that were men's own
Be then laid open for all time to con—
An unreservèd and surpassing page.

O Land that is our Love—how then shall we
Be judged when long the thousand years are past ?
Not with bright Venice by her sunlit sea.
And not with Rheims and Milan. If it last
So long, some traffic's tower our mark must be—
Some tale of gold upon the devouring Seasons cast.

Printed at
The Edinburgh Press
9 and 11 Young Street.

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